Though charity alone will not make one happy in the other world, yet it shall *lessen* his punishment. *Calamy's Serm.*

Collect into one sum as great a number as you please, this multitude, how great soever, *lessens* not one jot the power of adding to it, or brings him any nearer the end of the inexhaustible stock of number. *Locke.*

This thirst after fame betrays him into such indecencies as are a *lessening* to his reputation, and is looked upon as a weakness in the greatest characters. *Addison's Spectator.*

Nor are the pleasures which the brutal part of the creation enjoy, subject to be *lessened* by the uneasiness which arises from fancy. *Atterbury's Sermons.*

3. To degrade; to deprive of power or dignity.

Who seeks
To *lessen* thee, against his purpose serves
To manifest the more thy might. *Milton's Par. Lost.*

St. Paul chose to magnify his office, when ill men conspired to *lessen* it. *Atterbury Sermons.*

To LE'SSEN. *v. n.* To grow less; to shrink; to be diminished.

All government may be esteemed to grow strong or weak, as the general opinion in those that govern is seen to *lessen* or increase. *Temple.*

The objection *lessens* very much, and comes to no more than this, there was one witness of no good reputation. *Atterbury's Sermons.*

LE'SSER. *adj.* A barbarous corruption of *less*, formed by the vulgar from the habit of terminating comparatives in *er*; afterwards adopted by poets, and then by writers of prose.

What great despite doth fortune to thee bear,
Thus lowly to abase thy beauty bright,
That it should not deface all other *lesser* light. *Fa. Qu.*

It is the *lesser* blot, modesty finds,
Women to change their shapes than men their minds. *Shakespeare's Two Gentlemen of Verona.*

The mountains, and higher parts of the earth, grow *lesser* and *lesser* from age to age: sometimes the roots of them are weakened by subterraneous fires, and sometimes tumbled by earthquakes into those caverns that are under them. *Burnet's Theory of the Earth.*

Cain, after the murder of his brother, cries out, Every man that findeth me shall slay me. By the same reason may a man, in the state of nature, punish the *lesser* breaches of that law. *Locke.*

Any heat whatsoever promotes the ascent of mineral matter, but more especially of that which is subtile, and is consequently moveable more easily, and with a *lesser* power. *Woodward's Natural History.*

The larger here, and there the *lesser* lambs,
The new-fall'n young herd bleating for their dams. *Pope.*

LE'SSER. *adv.* [formed by corruption from *less*.]

Some say he's mad; others, that *lesser* hate him,
Do call it valiant fury. *Shakespeare's Macbeth.*

LE'SSES. *n. s.* [*laisses*, French.] The dung of beasts left on the ground.

LE'SSON. *n. s.* [*leçon*, French; *lectio*, Latin.]

1. Any thing read or repeated to a teacher, in order to improvement.

I but repeat that *lesson*
Which I have learn'd from thee. *Denham's Sophy.*

2. Precept; notion inculcated.

This days ensample hath this *lesson* dear
Deep written in my heart with iron pen,
That bliss may not abide in state of mortal men. *Fa. Qu.*

Be not jealous over the wife of thy bosom, and teach her not an evil *lesson* against thyself. *Ecclus.* ix. 1.

3. Portions of scripture read in divine service.

Notwithstanding so eminent properties, whereof *lessons* are happily destitute; yet *lessons* being free from some inconveniences whereunto sermons are more subject, they may, in this respect, no less take, than in other they must give the hand which betokeneth pre-eminence. *Hooker, b.* v.

4. Tune pricked for an instrument.

Those good laws were like good *lessons* set for a flute out of tune; of which *lessons* little use can be made, till the flute be made fit to be played on. *Davies on Ireland.*

5. A rating lecture.

She would give her a *lesson* for walking so late, that should make her keep within doors for one fortnight. *Sidney.*

To LE'SSON. *v. a.* [from the noun.] To teach; to instruct.

Even in kind love, I do conjure thee,
To *lesson* me.. *Shakesp. Two Gentlemen of Verona.*

Well hast thou *lesson'd* us, this shall we do. *Shakesp.*

Children should be seasoned betimes, and *lessoned* into a contempt and detestation of this vice. *L'Estrange's Fables.*

LE'SSOR. *n. s.* One who lets any thing to farm, or otherwise, by lease.

Lords of the world have but for life their lease,
And that too, if the *lessor* please, must cease. *Denham.*

If he demises the glebe to a layman, the tenant must pay the small tithes to the vicar, and the great tithes to the *lessor*. *Ayliffe's Parergon.*

LEST. *conj.* [from the adjective *least*.] That not.

Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed; *lest* if he should exceed, then thy brother should seem vile. *Deut.* xxv.

King Luitprand brought hither the corps, *lest* it might be abused by the barbarous nations. *Addison on Italy.*

LE'STERCOCK. *n. s.*

Upon the north coast, for want of good harbours they have a device of two sticks filled with corks, and crossed flat-long, out of whose midst there riseth a thread, and at the same hangeth a sail; to this engine, termed a *lestercock*, they tie one end of their boulter, so as the wind coming from the shore filleth the sail, and the sail carrieth the boulter into the sea, which, after the respite of some hours, is drawn in again by a cord fastened at the nearer end. *Carew on Cornwall.*

To LET. *v. a.* [lætan, Saxon.]

1. To allow; to suffer; to permit.

Nay, nay, quoth he, *let* be your strife and doubt. *Fairf.*

Where there is a certainty and an uncertainty, *let* the uncertainty go, and hold to that which is certain. *Bp. Sanderson.*

On the croud he cast a furious look,
And wither'd all their strength before he spoke;
Back on your lives, *let* be, said he, my prey,
And let my vengeance take the destin'd way. *Dryden.*

Remember me; speak, Raymond, will you *let* him?
Shall he remember Leonora. *Dryden's Spanish Friar.*

We must not *let* go manifest truths, because we cannot answer all questions about them. *Collier.*

One who fixes his thoughts intently on one thing, so as to take but little notice of the succession of ideas in his mind, *lets* slip out of his account a good part of that duration. *Locke.*

A solution of mercury in aqua fortis being poured upon iron, copper, tin, or lead, dissolves the metal, and *lets* go the mercury. *Newton's Opticks.*

2. A sign of the optative mood used before the first and imperative before the third person. Before the first person singular it signifies resolution; fixed purpose, or ardent wish.

Let me die with the Philistines. *Judges.*

Here is her picture: *let* me see; I think,
If I had such a tire, this face of mine
Were full as lovely as in this of her's. *Shakespeare.*

3. Before the first person plural, *let* implies exhortation.

Rise; *let* us go. *Mark.*

4. Before the third person, singular or plural, *let* implies permission or precept.

Let the soldiers seize him for one of the assassinates. *Dryd.*

5. Before a thing in the passive voice, *let* implies command.

Let not the objects which ought to be contiguous be separated, and *let* those which ought to be separated be apparently so to us; but *let* this be done by a small and pleasing difference. *Dryden's Dufresnoy.*

6. *Let* has an infinitive mood after it without the particle *to*.

But one submissive word which you *let* fall,
Will make him in good humour with us all. *Dryden.*

The seventh year thou shalt *let* it rest, and lie still. *Exod.*

7. To leave.

They did me too much injury,
That ever said I hearken'd for your death.
If it were so, I might have *let* alone.
Th' insulting hand of Douglas over you. *Shakespeare.*

The publick outrages of a destroying tyranny are but childish appetites, *let* alone till they are grown ungovernable. *L'Estrange's Fables.*

Let me alone to accuse him afterwards. *Dryd. Sp. Friar.*

This is of no use, and had been better *let* alone: he is fain to resolve all into present possession. *Locke.*

Nestor, do not *let* us alone till you have shortened our necks, and reduced them to their antient standard. *Addison.*

This notion might be *let* alone and despised as a piece of harmless unintelligible enthusiasm. *Rogers's Sermons.*

8. To more than permit.

There's a letter for you, Sir, if your name be Horatio, as I am *let* to know it is. *Shakespeare's Hamlet.*

9. To put to hire; to grant to a tenant.

Solomon had a vineyard at Baal Hamon; he *let* the vineyard unto keepers. *Cant.* viii. 11.

Nothing deadens so much the composition of a picture, as figures which appertain not to the subject: we may call them figures to be *let*. *Dryden's Dufresnoy.*

She *let* her second floor to a very genteel youngish man. *Tatler*, N°. 88.

A law was enacted, prohibiting all bishops, and other ecclesiastical corporations, from *letting* their lands for above the term of twenty years. *Swift.*

10. To suffer any thing to take a course which requires no impulsive violence.

She *let* them down by a cord through the window. *Josh.*

Launch out into the deep, and *let* down your nets for a draught. *Luke* v. 4.

Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink. *Gen.* xxiv. 14.

My heart sinks in me while I hear him speak,
And every slacken'd fibre drops its hold;
Like nature *letting* down the springs of life:
So much the name of father awes me still. *Dryden.*

From this point of the story, the poet is *let* down to his traditional poverty. *Pope's Essay on Homer.*

You must *let* it down, that is, make it softer by tempering it. *Moxon's Mechanical Exercises.*

11. To permit to take any state or course.

Finding an ease in not understanding, he *let* loose his thoughts wholly to pleasure. *Sidney, b.* ii.

Let reason teach impossibility in any thing, and the will of man doth *let* it go. *Hooker, b.* i.

The beginning of strife is as when one *letteth* out water. *Prov.* xvii. 14.

As terebration doth meliorate fruit, so doth pricking vines or trees after they be of some growth, and thereby *letting* forth gum or tears. *Bacon's Natural History.*

And if I knew which way to do't,
Your honour safe, I'd *let* you out. *Hudibras.*

The *letting* out our love to mutable objects doth but enlarge our hearts, and make them the wider marks for fortune to be wounded. *Boyle.*

He was *let* loose among the woods as soon as he was able to ride on horseback, or carry a gun. *Addison's Spectator.*

12. To LET *blood*, is elliptical for *to let out blood*. To free it from confinement; to suffer it to stream out of the vein.

Be rul'd by me;
Let's purge this choler without *letting blood*. *Shakespeare.*

Hippocrates *let* great quantities of *blood*, and opened several veins at a time. *Arbuthnot on Coins.*

13. *To* LET *blood*, is used with a dative of the person whose blood is let.

Tell him, Cateshy,
His antient knot of dangerous adversaries
To-morrow are *let blood* at Pomfret castle. *Shakespeare.*

As terebration doth meliorate fruit, so doth *letting* plants *blood*, as pricking vines, thereby letting forth tears. *Bacon.*

14. *To* LET *in*. To admit.

Let in your king, whose labour'd spirits,
Sore wearied in this action of swift speed,
Crave harbourage within your city walls. *Shakespeare.*

Roscetes presented his army before the gates of the city, in hopes that the citizens would raise some tumult, and *let* him *in*. *Knolles's History of the Turks.*

What boots it at one gate to make defence,
And at another to *let in* the foe,
Effeminately vanquish'd. *Milton's Agonistes.*

The more tender our spirits are made by religion, the more easy we are to *let in* grief, if the cause be innocent. *Taylor's Rule of Holy Living.*

They but preserve the ashes, thou the flame,
True to his sense, but truer to his fame,
Fording his current, where thou find'st it low,
Let'st in thine own to make it rise and flow. *Denham.*

To give a period to my life, and to his fears, you're welcome; here's a throat, a heart, or any other part, ready to *let in* death, and receive his commands. *Denham.*

It is the key that *lets* them *into* their very heart, and enables them to command all that is there. *South's Sermons.*

There are pictures of such as have been distinguished by their birth or miracles, with inscriptions, that *let* you *into* the name and history of the person represented. *Addison.*

Most historians have spoken of ill success, and terrible events, as if they had been *let into* the secrets of providence, and made acquainted with that private conduct by which the world is governed. *Addison's Spectator*, N°. 483.

These are not mysteries for ordinary readers to be *let into*. *Addison's Spectator*, N°. 221.

As soon as they have hewn down any quantity of the rocks, they *let in* their springs and reservoirs among their works. *Addison on Italy.*

As we rode through the town, I was *let into* the characters of all the inhabitants; one was a dog, another a whelp, and another a cur. *Addison's Freeholder.*

15. *To* LET *in*. To procure admission.

They should speak properly and correctly, whereby they may *let* their thoughts *into* other mens minds the more easily. *Locke.*

16. *To* LET *off*. To discharge. Originally used of an arrow dismissed from the gripe, and therefore suffered to fly off the string; now applied to guns.

Charging my pistol only with powder, I first cautioned the emperor not to be afraid, and then *let* it *off* in the air. *Swift.*

17. *To* LET *out*. To lease out; to give to hire or farm.

18. *To* LET. [lettan, Saxon.] To hinder; to obstruct; to oppose.

Their senses are not *letted* from enjoying their objects: we have the impediments of honour, and the torments of conscience. *Sidney.*

To glorify him in all things, is to do nothing whereby the name of God may be blasphemed; nothing whereby the salvation of Jew or Grecian, or any in the church of Christ, may be *let* or hindered. *Hooker, b.* i.

Leave, ah leave off, whatever wight thou be,
To *let* a weary wretch from her due rest;
And trouble dying soul's tranquillity. *Fairy Queen.*

Wherefore do ye *let* the people from their works; go you unto your burdens. *Exod.* v. 4.

The mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now *letteth* will *let*, until he be taken out of the way. 2 *Thes.*

I will work, and who will *let* it. *Isa.* xliii. 11.

And now no longer *letted* of his prey,
He leaps up at it with enrag'd desire,
O'erlooks the neighbours with a wide survey,
And nods at every house his threatening fire. *Dryden.*

19. *To* LET, when it signifies *to permit* or *leave*, has *let* in the preterite and part. passive; but when it signifies *to hinder*, it has *letted*; as, *multa me impedierunt, many things have letted me.* *Introduction to Grammar.*

To LET. *v. n.* To forbear; to withold himself.

After king Ferdinando had taken upon him the person of a fraternal ally to the king, he would not *let* to counsel the king. *Bacon's Henry* VII.

LET. *n. s.* [from the verb.] Hindrance; obstacle; obstruction; impediment.

The secret *lets* and difficulties in public proceedings are innumerable and inevitable. *Hooker, b.* i.

Solyman without *let* presented his army before the city of Belgrade. *Knolles's History of the Turks.*

It had been done e'er this, had I been consul;
We had had no stop, no *let*. *Benj. Johnson's Catiline.*

Just judge, two *lets* remove; that free from dread,
I may before thy high tribunal plead. *Sandys on Job.*

To these internal dispositions to sin add the external opportunities and occasions concurring with them, and removing all *lets* and rubs out of the way, and making the path of destruction plain before the sinner's face; so that he may run his course freely. *South.*

LET, the termination of diminutive words, from lyte, Saxon, *little*, *small*.

LETHA'RGICK. *adj.* [*lethargique*, Fr. from *lethargy*.] Sleepy, beyond the natural power of sleep.

Vengeance is as if minutely proclaimed in thunder from heaven, to give men no rest in their sins, till they awake from the *lethargick* sleep, and arise from so dead, so mortiferous a state. *Hammond's Fundamentals.*

Let me but try if I can wake his pity
From his *lethargick* sleep. *Denham's Sophy.*

A lethargy demands the same cure and diet as an apoplexy from a phlegmatick ease, such being the constitution of the *lethargick*. *Arbuthnot on Diet.*

LETHA'RGICKNESS. *n. s.* [from *lethargick*.] Sleepiness; drowsiness.

A grain of glory mixt with humbleness,
Cures both a fever, and *lethargicknesse*. *Herbert.*

LE'THARGY. *n. s.* [λήθαργία; *lethargie*, Fr.] A morbid drowsiness; a sleep from which one cannot be kept awake.

The *lethargy* must have his quiet course;
If not, he foams at mouth, and by and by
Breaks out to savage madness. *Shakespeare's Othello.*

Though his eye is open, as the morning's,
Towards lusts and pleasures; yet so fast a *lethargy*
Has seiz'd his powers towards publick cares and dangers,
He sleeps like death. *Denham's Sophy.*

Europe lay then under a deep *lethargy*; and was no otherwise to be rescued from it, but by one that would cry mightily. *Atterbury.*

A *lethargy* is a lighter sort of apoplexy, and demands the same cure and diet. *Arbuthnot on Diet.*

LE'THARGIED. *adj.* [from the noun.] Laid asleep; entranced.

His motion weakens, or his discernings
Are *lethargied*. *Shakespeare's King Lear.*

LE'THE. *n. s.* [λήθη.] Oblivion; a draught of oblivion.

The conquering wine hath steept our sense
In soft and delicate *lethe*. *Shakes. Ant. and Cleopatra.*

Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls
Her wat'ry labyrinth, which who so drinks
Forgets both joy and grief. *Milton.*

LE'TTER. *n. s.* [from *let*.]

1. One who lets or permits.
2. One who hinders.
3. One who gives vent to any thing; as a blood letter.

LE'TTER. *n. s.* [*lettre*, French; *litera*, Latin.]

1. One of the elements of syllables.

A superscription was written over him in *letters* of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. *Luke* xxiii. 38.

Thou whoreson Zed! thou unnecessary *letter*! *Shakes.*